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ABSTRACT

How relevant are some textbooks when professors, even in the same department, teach similar courses in different ways? Are there methods by which textbook companies can receive realistic, substantive feedback concerning the quality of communication textbook offerings? This paper details the methods by which its author/educator became a textbook reviewer. The paper then presents three reviews of current and proposed speech and mass communication texts that the author/educator, an associate professor of mass communication and director of broadcast journalism at Southern Arkansas University, wrote for Allyn and Bacon and Harcourt Brace College Publishers. It notes that although the texts reviewed were excellent, not even the best writing will guarantee adoption--marketing and promotion are vital to the success of any academic offering. Detailed reviews by the author of two textbooks and a proposal comprise the majority of this paper. (NKA)

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"Improving Communication Textbooks Through Rigorous Processes of Revision and Review."

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CS 510 603

Communication faculty members are often inundated each semester with unsolicited examination copies of textbooks in their areas of expertise. Depending upon the institution, selection of textbooks is either an individual or group decision. How relevant are some textbooks when professors, even in the same department, teach similar courses in different ways? Are there methods by which textbook companies can receive realistic, substantive feedback concerning the quality of communication textbook offerings? What about student concerns, including readability, significance, and cost? I will detail the methods by which I became a textbook reviewer. It will be followed by three reviews of current and proposed speech and mass communication texts I wrote this summer for Allyn & Bacon and Harcourt Brace College Publishers. Hopefully, my experiences will encourage others to become involved as reviewers to improve classroom instruction.

As an associate professor of mass communication and director of broadcast journalism at Southern Arkansas University, I have the sole responsibility of selecting textbooks. Teaching in such an ever-changing field means

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receiving numerous examination copies of radio and television writing and production textbooks. The depth and sophistication of each can vary widely, an important consideration to make for professors who teach at small institutions with modest budgets for equipment and maintenance. Since I am in this category, my criteria for textbook selection will take into greater account principles of writing and analysis. Using a textbook featuring expensive equipment designed for large professional applications would make little sense.

As a result, some of my broadcast journalism courses do not utilize textbook adoptions, but syllabi featuring extensive bibliographies from the SAU Magale Library collection. When I attend regional and national conventions of professional associations, I find many of my colleagues use this same strategy. Textbooks are used in my Principles of Speech, Introduction to Mass Communication, and other broadcast journalism courses, as instructional materials specific to my teaching style have been located.

In 1990, I received a letter from Roxbury Publishing

Company asking me to review the upcoming second edition of Speech Resources: Exercises & Activities by Ellen Hay. It was a rewarding educational experience to critically evaluate my teaching style during the evaluation process. When the review was completed, I felt I could best aid the communication discipline not by writing articles for journals, but reviews for publishers. While the former is certainly important, I believe in student-centered instruction, with the classroom being the most important room on campus.

Most reviews consist of reading textbooks and answering specific open-ended questions, with a few requiring classroom use or student evaluations. I have reviewed about a dozen for most of the major publishing companies, and strongly encourage all faculty, regardless of discipline, to do likewise. In the age of the Internet, applying to serve as a reviewer is quite easy. Most academic publishers have online reviewer forms. While there is no guarantee a telephone call or E-mail message will immediately ensue, chances are some communication will eventually come from an editor or sales representative

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regarding a potential review.

I believe brutally honest constructive criticism is the best way to approach any textbook review. This summer, I was fortunate to read two textbooks and a third proposal, all of which were excellent. These reviews follow this paper.

Even the best writing, however, will not guarantee adoption. Marketing and promotion are vital to the success of any academic offering, as witnessed by the hordes of publishing representatives at academic conventions. Creating a bandwagon effect of perceived success may make the difference between adoption and non-adoption. In any case, it is our responsibility as educators to take an active, ongoing role in the creation of quality teaching materials. Such involvement has definitely made me a more effective teacher and writer.

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Harcourt Brace College Publishers
***The Speaker's Handbook*, 5e by Jo Sprague and Douglas Stuart**

Name: James E. Reppert
Social Security #:
School Affiliation: Southern Arkansas University
Number of Years Teaching: 16, 18 when including two as a Teaching Assistant
May we quote you for marketing purposes? Yes
May we acknowledge you in the preface? Yes

A. General Information

1. For which course would the book be most suited? Do you teach the course, currently? When will you teach it again? Which text(s) do you use? Have you ever used *The Speaker's Handbook*?

This text would be used at my institution in Speech 1113/Principles of Speech. While my teaching specialty is Broadcast Journalism, I have taught 55 sections of the course here since Fall 1987. I am teaching the course in Spring 2001, and will teach it again in First Summer Session 2001 (two sections) and Fall 2001. The current text I use is *Speech Resources: Exercises and Activities* by Ellen Hay (Roxbury). I was not aware of the Sprague/Stuart text until I had this opportunity to review it.

2. What qualities are most important to you in a public speaking textbook? How does *The Speaker's Handbook* measure up in these areas?

Clear instructions, quality examples, and concise writing/analysis, coming from a perspective that empathizes with the many research and delivery challenges faced by novice public speakers. Many public speaking texts, while well intentioned, are excessively long, with irrelevant examples for real-world student speaking situations. I strongly believe that the book does an excellent job of providing students with trenchant, realistic methods for overall success in oral communication.

B. Structure/Table of Contents

1. Please take a look at the Table of Contents. Is the selection and sequence of chapters appealing to you? Are there any topics not included in the Table of Contents that you would like to see included? If so, what are they?

I would take information concerning Extemporaneous Speaking (23a.) and move it closer to the front. The necessity to be extemporaneous and conversational must be stressed early on. Additionally, there MUST be a stronger emphasis on the vocalics (uhs, ums, ers, you knows, etc.) and dropped g's that litter everyday conversation, including college speech courses. Students should also consider going to the classroom during off-

hours and practice their presentations, visualizing success and eliminating some nervousness. If they have access to audiocassette recorders or camcorders, use them to pick up potential problems with organization, syntax or vocalics (page 327).

2. Are the appropriate topics covered in sufficient depth? Is too much or little attention paid to any specific topic? Should any be omitted? Please explain.

I actually like the basic format of the text as it is structured. Each section is detailed enough for students to get a good grasp of course material, but at the same time not overdoing it. A stylistic proposal on my part would be to eliminate the sample speeches in the appendix. I have always found them, including the well-intentioned examples here, to be incredibly boring and a waste of time. I videotape all graded speeches each semester, showing representative samples from my video archive to new students. They are more pertinent to student needs.

C. Please answer the following questions for each chapter in the book.

1. Is the organization of the chapter logical and consistent? If not, what changes would you suggest?

Chapter 1 – Yes, even though information on "the joint creation of meaning" is a bit tendentious.

Chapter 2 – Yes, with a focus on "enhanced conversation" being the most important element discussed.

Chapter 3 – Yes, but something on procrastination in selecting a speech topic could be addressed. Most poor speeches result from students waiting too long to select topics.

Chapter 4 – Yes, this is particularly well-organized and written, especially in terms of getting feedback from audience members prior to beginning any research.

Chapter 5 – Yes, but more detailed information on "electronic information retrieval" would be helpful, as more students are using this than the library for researching both data and information for visual aids.

Chapter 6 – Yes, with "positive internal statements" appropriate for self-conscious, nervous speakers.

Chapter 7 – Yes, but a minimum of three main points is almost always necessary to avoid students running short on time. Approach to substructure is good here.

Chapter 8 – Yes, with the explanation of "group subpoints" particularly well-done.

Chapter 9 – Yes, with a caveat that some students over-prepare outlines, resulting in presentations looking good on paper but lacking in conversationality, extemporaneous approach, and eye contact.

Chapter 10 – Yes, but internal summaries and previews are overrated as important elements of speech. Too much of each makes presentations come across as "Public Speaking for Dummies with Short Attention Spans."

Chapter 11 – Yes, as framing the topic to a speaker's advantage is vital to audience perceptions of relevance to them as listeners.

Chapter 12 – Yes, but the element of a "clincher" is overrated and often gimmicky depending on subject matter. Elements of "psychological closure" are good, however.

Chapter 13 – Yes, VERY good. No complaints here.

Chapter 14 – Yes, with "reasoning fallacies" and "word choice" the best sections.

Chapter 15 – Yes, but take it a step further. Oral style is more a present tense approach to speaking. Inherent in this is student use of active voice, often with verbs ending in "ing" or "s."

Chapter 16 – Yes, as this is explained clearly, particularly how a well-intentioned effort at audience participation can backfire (humor, a show of hands, etc.).

Chapter 17 – Yes, as the section on bolstering credibility through content is the best method of the audience lending source credibility to the speaker.

Chapter 18 – Yes, but always relating speeches to needs and values of speakers can be overrated. Students can reserve personal judgments and evaluate presentations based on the merit of topics. Over-relating of topics often leads to overt pandering, such as in some political speeches.

Chapter 19 – Yes, but the language is a bit dry. Students are walking down the middle of the highway, presenting information in an interesting, yet impartial, manner. Saying that here would be a plus.

Chapter 20 – Yes, with information concerning "opposing arguments" well-stated. Discuss them, then politely pick them apart.

Chapter 21 – Yes, no suggestions here.

Chapter 22 – Yes, with tips on debate (22b.) and preparing for a group interview (22d.) REALLY well-written.

Chapter 23 – Yes, but why avoid impromptu speaking? Am I missing something here? Isn't that how we speak each day of our lives outside of class? We LEARN from paying particular attention to this mode of speaking. Our speech styles can become more clean and concise from trying to speak in complete sentences, even in an impromptu manner. Students are more acutely aware of their verbal miscues and vocalized pauses as a result. The rest of the chapter is fine.

Chapter 24 – Yes, but my experiences with students are that most practice sessions are basically the same, with additional time being used to refine conversationality or choreograph movements when specifically addressing visual aids (poster boards or video clips).

Chapter 25 – Yes, as this covers all the bases.

Chapter 26 – Yes, but movement can also be problematic if not kept in check, as some students may wander around without purpose.

Chapter 27 – Yes, but well-prepared student speakers must, as I like to say, "Own the room" in the face of negative or apathetic audience reaction. That is sometimes the best measure of a "performance," staying professional no matter the circumstances.

Chapter 28 – Yes, but include more information on the use of videotapes as VAs, as many professors at other institutions indicate this is more prevalent than slides, but less so then traditional poster boards. As mentioned in the text, color variation in posters is a plus.

Chapter 29 – Yes, it is important for the speaker to continue to maintain control during questions and answers, even if it means politely cutting someone off.

2. Have the authors cited appropriate research applicable to the topics covered in this chapter? What additional studies, if any, are needed?

Yes. There is no need for the authors to perform additional research on chapter topics, as the text is solid in terms of research. I particularly like how the index is constructed, with detailed attention given to various conceptual references. This is likely to benefit speech professors in answering various questions to students in the preparatory process, as they can quickly look up research and delivery modes for instructional purposes.

3. Are the authors' writing style, tone, and level appropriate for your students? Why or why not?

The writing style is certainly appropriate for college-level speech students. It is as well-written as any other speech text I have examined for use or have reviewed. Any problems or suggestions concerning overall style and tone have been addressed in thorough responses to Question 1 (Organization).

4. Overall, how would you rate the quality of this chapter – excellent, good, fair or poor?

This is a question for which the answer for each of the 29 chapters is the same – excellent. Areas for potential improvement or bits of constructive criticism are ladled out in detail in various sections of this review.

D. Please answer the following questions for the book as a whole.

1. Please comment on the pedagogical elements used. How effective are the examples, illustrations, and the instructional method the authors used? Please be specific and cite examples.

The pedagogical elements used are quite sound throughout the text. Examples are appropriate and well-reasoned. As someone whose main area of instructional focus is Broadcast Journalism, I am particularly gratified to see the approach taken by the authors regarding audio and visual appeals. The notion of visualizing success as a speaker cannot be underestimated. The fact that the authors stress the use of quality visual aids is also a plus. Repeated practice, either to friends or to audiocassette recorders or camcorders, is a prerequisite to success. Of particular relevance to professors is Chapter 16, "Attention and Interest." Its examples reinforce the concept of getting audience members actively interested in a speaker's remarks. If a speaker has no enthusiasm in a topic, why should the audience care?

2. What are this book's greatest strengths? Weaknesses? How does it compare with similar texts for this course?

Its greatest strength is providing a logical, sequential method of putting together speeches: Preparation; Organization; Development; Presentation. While professors may structure courses and lectures in a slightly different manner than suggested by the text, students WILL become better speakers if they adhere to guidelines presented by Sprague and Stewart. Its emphases on clear writing and sound analyses are particularly cogent. A section on "Speaking Ethics" is an important subject that is not addressed in some

competitive speech texts on the market. It is a subject that is being addressed at more and more intercollegiate debate tournaments.

I would not judge the text as having any major weaknesses, as it is extremely thorough. Professors can be equally effective in the classroom with this text while emphasizing some sections and minimizing others. It compares favorably with other texts for this course, and is unique in its approach to ensuring quality work habits in a handbook format.

One piece of constructive criticism is in order. I have always disagreed with the notion of keeping visual aids turned away from the audience when they are not being specifically discussed (page 374). If that is so important, why do television news anchors have graphics over their shoulders when reading stories? The answer is easy – to reinforce the visual metaphor of a story. That same approach can be used in any public speaking presentational style. In my 18 years of teaching speech (in addition to serving as a successful college debate coach), I have never seen visual aids inhibit a speaker's performance or distract from audience perceptions of a topic. VISUALS REINFORCE SUBJECT MATTER. The old canard of taking VAs on poster boards and turning them around should be shelved permanently.

3. Finally, is this a text you would adopt in the future? Why or why not?

Yes. *The Speaker's Handbook* provides some of the most effective, realistic research and delivery techniques of any oral communication text on the market. Students can become first-rate extemporaneous, conversational and substantive speakers under the guidance of Jo Sprague and Douglas Stuart.

E. Ancillaries

Which of the following ancillaries do you use? Which ancillaries are most important to your adoption decision? Are there other ancillaries that are important to you? Please list.

To me, the most important instructional resource is the text. I intentionally utilize the exact text in class that my students use, as I have little use for Instructor's Manuals. Of the ancillaries listed below, the most salient resource would be a Web site, providing invaluable research and delivery instructional aids for public speaking students.

a. Instructor's Manual/Test Bank – No
b. Transparencies – No
c. Computerized Test Bank – No
d. Video of Speeches – No
e. Student Resource Manual – No
f. SpeechMaker CD-ROM – No
g. Web site – Yes…an EXCELLENT instructional resource
h. Power Point Slides – No
i. Interrater Reliability Video with manual – Possibly…unsure as to what this is

Allyn & Bacon
Better Broadcast Writing, Better Broadcast News (prospectus)

1. Your Course: I have been a faculty member at Southern Arkansas University since 1987, and developed the Broadcast News Writing course in Spring 1989. The enclosed Prometheus interactive syllabus contains 35 textbook, research and writing assignments, in addition to the production of university radio and television programs. The course primarily consists of junior and senior Broadcast Journalism majors. Roughly 15-20 students are enrolled, with a prerequisite being a print journalism news writing course, one of the required areas of study for a Mass Communication degree. I emphasize a writing style that is conversational and in active voice. Skills are honed through numerous assignments, as can be seen on the syllabus, and through the aforementioned student-produced weekly broadcasts. The textbook is The Broadcast News Process (5th edition), which I used as an undergraduate at North Dakota State University in 1980-81 (1st edition).

2. The Competition and the Market: I have used the Redmond textbook because of my familiarity with it, but found myself changing the syllabus in Spring 2001 due to its lack of current topics and over reliance on theory or old assignments that I completed as a Broadcast News Writing student. There are bits and pieces of a number of writing and production texts that have been useful to me, but nothing on the market is currently suitable for my classroom needs. The author is correct in his assessment of the competition, which is why there is a market niche for the prospectus. In talking with colleagues at regional and national conventions of professional associations, the topic of a quality broadcast writing textbook is frequently addressed.

3. Approach: The reason I like the sample chapters is precisely because of the blend between the author's professional and academic experiences. A realistic textbook instructional style is vital to the writing and reporting skills of each broadcast student. Yes, the approach would be valuable to my students, and it does come across in the sample chapters. Chapter II-A, Page 10 provides a quality example of a personal experience (Reagan-Gorbachev) that students could identify with in a constructive manner.

4. Chapter Topics and Sequence: It dovetails in nicely with my organizational pattern for instruction, as a logical sequencing of ideas is apparent. For a textbook with a proposed length of 200 pages, depth of coverage is fine. Besides, many professors will add information to each chapter similar to what the author is addressing. With that in mind, length and coverage are adequate. Chapters V and VI should also employ personal experiences on the part of the author, or each runs the risk of being as dry and banal as competing textbooks. It must be pointed out in Chapter V that, depending upon the station, there will be slight variations in television studio and field scripting formats. However, for a broadcast writing course, the prospectus covers most of the bases.

5. Internet: There is enough Internet coverage in the Table of Contents. This is an area that really depends upon individual instructor preferences. Web sites are good for downloading of scripts from radio and television stations to determine similarities and differences in writing styles and approaches to reportage. In addition, I use audio (ESPN.com) and video (MSNBC) Webcasts in class as supplemental sources for analyzing professional writing and reporting examples.

6. Writing Style: What I like about the prospectus is that the author practices what he preaches regarding conversational style. It is an enjoyable, not dry, read. Students will appreciate this informal, yet professional, writing approach. I do agree with the manner in which the information is presented, and indeed feel it will appeal to students in all areas of Mass Communication (broadcast majors and minors).

7. Length: I feel 200 pages is about right for a Broadcast News Writing text, but 20 chapters at ten pages each comes across as superficial coverage. Fewer, in depth chapters would probably make it more palatable to professors. As mentioned previously, this is a good read, but shorter chapters are problematic.

8. Features: "What You'll Learn" is an appropriate way to start each chapter, as students often read from an egocentric perspective. The personal examples are extremely useful, particularly a Chapter III-A, Page 8 discussion of "How to Almost Undo a Productive Career in Less than Three Minutes" detailing how even seasoned professionals mess up. I did not find any features that I would consider "least useful". "The Never-Ending Story" concept makes sense, because many introductory students, who may not be good writers, learn the functionality of continuous editing and reshaping of a particular news story. I like the idea. Can we be more creative with names, please? John Jones is quite a busy fellow, as he also appears far too often as a subject in the Redmond/Shook/Lattimore text. Yes, the examples are strong and relevant for student comprehension, such as "right", "wrong", "okay" and "better".

9. Pedagogical Aids: I have never been a big fan of certain elements of pedagogy. Either material jumps off the page to assist in the learning process or it doesn't. I have little use for review questions; rather taking major concepts addressed in the text (as I would here) and applying them to real-world situations. That is why I blew up my Broadcast News Writing syllabus early on last semester…too many irrelevant review questions. A glossary of terms would receive my vote as the most important instructional aid, as students will use them throughout their professional careers.

10. Supplements: Many broadcast writing examination texts I receive include well-meaning, but dated videotapes or over-written CD-ROMs that are unnecessary for quality writing and reporting purposes. A well-written, conversational text, with suggestions of Internet locations, would suffice. Discussing what to look for when analyzing regional or

national radio and television stations would also be appropriate. Everything else is all too often unnecessary or irrelevant for individual student needs. For example, I have taught at the college level for 18 years, and have never used an Instructor's Manual, but the same exact text my students use.

11. Overall Strengths: Well-written and organized, with the author's professional experiences lending him credence as an authority on the subject to both broadcast students and professors. The conversational, real-world approach to writing is something few competitors can match.

12. Overall Weaknesses: The only weakness is the proposal for 20 short chapters, which invariably would lead to scant coverage of some subject areas. Fewer chapters with additional depth would be a plus. I would also consider changing the name of the textbook, as it is less than creative.

13. Revision Suggestions: I like the text pretty much as presented, and will leave any tweaking of copy to the editors.

14. Bottom Line: ***Would you recommend that Allyn & Bacon pursue publishing this book?*** I believe Allyn & Bacon should work with the authors to publish the book with minor adjustments. This prospectus has the potential to be a major player in the broadcast writing textbook market. As someone who has struggled for years to find something worthwhile for my students, I may have finally found it. If published, I would seriously consider adopting it. I hope I have the chance to do just that.

Allyn & Bacon
***Principles of Electronic Media*, 1e by William Davie and James Upshaw**

1. Your course:
The enclosed 17-page Prometheus interactive syllabus describes my course in depth. It is officially titled Mass Communication 1003: Introduction to Mass Communication. Typically enrolled in the course are beginning freshmen and sophomores majoring in Broadcast Journalism or Print Journalism. It is one of five courses in a 15-hour Mass Communication core that all majors, regardless of emphasis, are required to take as a requirement for graduation. Most students are between the ages of 17-20.

2. Approach, Theme, and Trends:
As presently stated, the organizing theme is a significant one. The statement is important, as not all competing introductory textbooks in broadcasting or mass communication follow this tack. The phrase "better understand the professional world" is essential, as beginning students often have misconceptions of the field or unrealistic job expectations. That is why I believe the four chapters I have read are commendable, well written, and well-executed in adhering to the summarizing of "digital convergence on the profession of broadcasting." A trend the authors should include, and may have since it was not one of my chapters, is how Internet 2 could vastly change broadcasting as we know it. The Internet was not designed with the intention of Webcasting, yet has shown to be an effective method of transmitting programming, albeit in baby steps. Internet 2 will add in yet untold ways to the digital theme as posited by the authors. Regarding the chapters I was assigned (Law, Public Broadcasting, Advertising & Promotions, and Ratings), I would perform some minor tweaking, as described below, but the major trends are apparent and listed.

3. Table of Contents:
For a higher education Introduction to Broadcasting course, the course treatment is fine. It would be challenging to shoehorn a 17th chapter (Horizons/Future) into a 16-week semester due to time constraints, unless two chapters were covered in a single week. However, considering the depth and specificity of material I have read in the four chapters, such condensing would be difficult. The chapters effectively cover a gamut of topics that I would teach in an introductory broadcasting course, even though professors will teach the same course with this textbook in vastly differing ways. I would not offer any suggestions for improvements, as the organizational structure of the Table of Contents is fine as listed.

4. Readability and length:
Yes. It appears as if the authors spent a considerable amount of time trying to write in a more conversational style, which I find assists in student comprehension of difficult or dry material. Chapter lengths are appropriate, with each I have read in line with competing mass communication or broadcasting textbooks. The chapters will serve as substantive, yet easy, overall reads for students.

5. Chapter review: 10/Law; 15/Public Broadcasting; 12/Advertising & Promotions; 13/Ratings

a) I have no problems with the concepts or theories in any of these chapters. It would have been helpful to have each completed without gaps, but enough was sent to pass valid judgments. I look at these chapters as a student might: "What is in it for me?" For example, Chapter 12/Advertising & Promotions is excellent at providing a step-by-step examination of each, with templates students can use when writing real-world examples later on for radio or television production courses. Topic selection is fine, as different authors will always have varying degrees of emphases concerning what they believe is important. With this in mind, elements addressed in Chapter 15/Public Broadcasting are both timely and relevant.

b) Page 36 of Chapter 13/Ratings discusses "detailed viewer tracking." There are other hard disk television recording systems on the market that also have the potential for television viewer tracking. It is a minor point, but something to be considered nonetheless. I could not find any data in the other three chapters that was troubling regarding accuracy or interpretation.

c) I found myself unconsciously copyediting as I read the chapters, and was pleasantly surprised at how well the material flowed naturally from one topic to the next. As a result, I found no "unclear passages, gaps, or rough transitions."

d) Yes. Students will have no problems understanding the material here. It appears the copy, once originally written, has been edited once or twice. It is written at a level of comprehension similar to other textbooks in the field.

e) From what I read, there were no gaps in current scholarship. Obvious landmarks are included, particularly court cases such as in Chapter 10/Law. Even so, this will be the benefit of having a course Web site, as Davie and Upshaw can quickly and easily update FCC regulations or court cases decided after the 1st edition has been published.

6. Features:

a) Quotes – The ones I read were hokey and ill fitting. I would eliminate all quotes before printing.

b) Prologue, an opening vignette – Helpful in establishing Chapter content, particularly in Chapter 15/Public Broadcasting.

c) Principles, as an organizing feature at the beginning of the chapter and within the chapter near the corresponding content – This works extremely well as shown, for example, in Chapter 12/Advertising & Promotions.

d) Future section, just before the summary – In broadcasting, prognostications are a challenging and often incorrect endeavor.

e) Chapter Summary – A must in any textbook.

f) References and Further Reading – Students rarely pay much attention to either.

g) Food for Thought (discussion questions not yet developed) – Students often develop these on their own through class discussions with the instructor.

h) Boldface Key Terms/Glossary – A must.

i) Timeline – Chronologies are excellent at placing concepts, technologies, or inventions in a proper historical perspective.

j) Pro Talk Boxes – Other broadcast writing and production textbooks use a similar effective strategy.

k) Notes – Necessary.

7. Competition:
The authors, in their introduction, cast a keen collective eye on their competitors. Of the textbooks I have examined over the years, I have found that *Broadcasting, Cable, The Internet and Beyond: An Introduction to Modern Electronic Media* (Dominick/Sherman/Messere) and *Broadcasting in America: A Survey of Television and Radio* (Head/Sterling/Schofield/Spann/McGregor) are the best. Each is well written, thorough, and organizationally sound. *Principles of Electronic Media* has the potential to be in this class, if the other chapters are as good as the four I have read. Davie and Upshaw will have to continually update and revise material, as the Broadcasting industry will have changed drastically from the 1st to 2nd editions.

8. Supplements:
My instructional approach is unique in that I assiduously avoid Instructor's Manuals, preferring to teach out of the same exact textbook that my students purchase. I primarily use videotapes as supplemental instructional tools. I do not use CD-ROMs, Test Banks, Transparencies, or PowerPoint Slides. Many class sessions involve specific or tangential student usage of Prometheus, which has been discussed previously. Having course Web site audio or video clips available for students to evaluate in or out of class would be beneficial. I am sure many instructors would use most ancillaries if offered with *Principles of Electronic Media*. I teach all of my courses alone, as there are no teaching assistants in our department. A text-specific Web site would be appropriate, making sure appropriate tutorials were available for adoptees to customize their Introduction to

Broadcasting courses. Regarding Web site elements, a cafeteria-style menu should be available for instructors to pick and choose what will work best for their specific courses. I personally would not use a PowerPoint lecture series, but Allyn & Bacon should prepare one for adoptees.

9. Bottom Line:
I would want to read the Davie/Upshaw textbook as a whole before I made any decision regarding course adoption. However, if the rest of the textbook is of the same quality and substance as what I have read, the authors have a chance to be extremely competitive in the field. Realistically, how the textbook is marketed and promoted, in addition to such shallow superficialities as how it looks, will play major roles in its ultimate success or failure. If I taught a specific Introduction to Broadcasting course, *Principles of Electronic Media* would definitely be given serious consideration.

10. Internet, Technology:
Answers to how I currently use interactive courseware applications can be found in Question #1 and Question #11a below. As can be seen on page 1 of my syllabus, 10 Internet links specific to areas of instruction are included. Each comes in handy for outside research for media quizzes, term papers, and class discussions. Technology is important, but critical analyses by students of broadcasting issues are most important for long-term understanding, and I believe the authors tackle these issues well.

11. Distance Learning:
a) No. Students enroll in my Introduction to Mass Communication course through Prometheus, an interactive courseware system developed by George Washington University. As mentioned in my response to Question #1, the enclosed syllabus hard copy is from my personal Prometheus Web site. Videos are involved in my course, but as a supplemental instructional tool for class discussions.

b) The most important elements I would look for if teaching a DL course would be a Web site and course management tools. While CD-ROMs and print supplements will no doubt make up a significant portion of an Allyn & Bacon instructional package, faculty colleagues with whom I have spoken at conventions first mention Web sites and course management tools. Broadcast or mass communication faculty often adapt print supplements from their previous instructional experiences. Compilation CD-ROMs or instructional videotapes would also serve to enhance student learning.

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